
**State of California
The Resources Agency
Department of Water Resources**

**SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Oroville Facilities
FERC Project No. 2100**



March 2006

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The Resources Agency
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March 2006

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This Settlement Agreement Recreation Management Plan (RMP) was prepared to support the Settlement Agreement between the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and other parties. This RMP contains several proposed recreation enhancement measures and programs that were identified during relicensing recreation settlement discussions in 2004 and 2005, some of which exceed the recreation needs identified in Study R-17 – *Recreation Needs Analysis*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has prepared this Settlement Agreement Recreation Management Plan (RMP) as an amended component of its Application for a new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) License to operate the Oroville Facilities (FERC Project No. 2100 or project). The Oroville Facilities are located on the Feather River at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in Butte County, California and include Lake Oroville, the second largest reservoir in California and the primary water storage facility of the State Water Project (SWP). Lake Oroville and three other project reservoirs, as well as the Feather River, provide numerous water supply, power generation, and flood control benefits. In addition, the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, Oroville Wildlife Area, and other lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including a number of developed day use and overnight facilities, trails, boating facilities, and primitive use areas within the project area. This RMP focuses on these water- and reservoir-based recreation resources within the FERC project boundary that are under authority of DWR as the licensee of the Oroville Facilities.

The purpose of the RMP is to guide and facilitate the management of existing and future recreation resources associated with the Oroville Facilities. The RMP provides a vision of the desired future condition for recreation resources in the project area, establishes long-term goals and objectives for managing recreation resources in the project area, and identifies both site-specific and programmatic recreation measures to be implemented over the term of the anticipated new license. Several programs are presented in the RMP that implement these proposed measures. The cost estimates herein are preliminary and were derived from general reconnaissance-level analyses. While the proposed measures and actions identified in the RMP reflect the Licensee's recreation resource goals in the new license, the dollar amounts estimated herein are not a specific or actual funding level commitment.

Taken as a whole, the RMP represents a single "umbrella" protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PME) measure for recreation resources in the project area. The RMP is intended to be specific to DWR's recreation resource roles and responsibilities for the term of the new FERC license. The RMP does not make management or resource commitments for other entities such as federal and State agencies, Tribes, or other stakeholders. However, the continued active involvement of these other recreation participants in the project area is important in helping to meet the overall recreation needs of all visitors and area residents during the term of the new license. As such, continued coordination and cooperation with these participants will continue as defined in the RMP.

In preparation for development of this RMP, DWR conducted a series of extensive recreation resource and related studies to assess and evaluate existing and potential future recreation resources associated with the Oroville Facilities. This RMP is the

culmination of the results of those studies and is intended to relate most comprehensively to Relicensing Study R-17 – *Recreation Needs Analysis*. This RMP also includes proposed actions and enhancements and other measures that are not directly detailed in Study R-17, but were identified by stakeholders and DWR as being mutually beneficial toward the goals of recreation resource development and completion of a Settlement Agreement (SA) addressing a range of relicensing issues.

This RMP complies with FERC's regulations per 18 CFR 4.51(f)(5) and includes the following components:

- Description of the existing recreation facilities of the project that will be continued as project-related facilities during the new license term.
- Identification of existing facilities to be rehabilitated.
- Proposed new facilities and enhancement of existing facilities to meet existing or new recreation needs.
- A schedule for development or rehabilitation of all facilities.
- Identification of entities that will construct, maintain, and operate the facilities.
- An estimate of the costs of construction, operation, and maintenance of the facilities.
- Drawings of each recreation site illustrating approximate locations of existing and proposed facilities, as applicable.
- Descriptions of programs and/or plans for public interpretation and education.
- A plan for monitoring the use and condition of recreation facilities.
- A plan for the periodic review, and revision as necessary, of the RMP.

This RMP is in effect an implementation guide to plan, design, construct, renovate, monitor, fund, operate, and maintain existing and future public recreation facilities and programs in the project area. The activities identified are to continue throughout the term of the anticipated new license (up to 50 years), except if noted otherwise.

DWR, with stakeholder input, has identified a number of proposed actions and enhancements to help meet existing and future recreation needs (see Appendix A of this RMP for a listing) that are associated with the Oroville Facilities. Future recreation needs, such as development of additional campground capacity at several locations, have also been defined. These needs will be validated in the future through periodic monitoring of public recreation facility use, capacity, and condition. To accomplish this purpose and to incorporate actions from the SA process, several RMP activity areas or programs are included in this RMP:

- A *Recreation Facility Development Program* that defines DWR's construction-related responsibilities to address existing and future project-related recreation needs, identifies proposed recreation development projects, provides estimated costs and scheduling for these recreation measures, identifies approximate locations and provides conceptual layouts of the

development measures, and discusses general facility development standards and design criteria to be used.

- *A Recreation Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Program* that defines DWR's existing and future recreation facility O&M responsibilities. This program addresses existing and future project-related O&M recreation needs, provides estimated costs for annual O&M, and discusses general facility and use area maintenance standards to be used. Other programmatic costs, such as visitor health and safety management, are also defined for RMP implementation. Anticipated agreements are mentioned that may be entered into between DWR and other entities to provide for O&M at Project No. 2100 recreation facilities.
- *A Recreation Monitoring Program* that defines how DWR will conduct recreation resource monitoring and how the monitoring information will be used in decision-making. This program discusses the use of monitoring standards and indicators, defines monitoring needs, identifies periodic monitoring and reporting responsibilities, and identifies a decision-making framework related to when new facility construction would be triggered or initiated. Periodic visitor surveys are also defined.
- *A Resource Integration and Coordination Program* that defines how DWR will integrate recreation resource needs with other resource management needs (such as cultural, wildlife, and aquatic resources) over time. This program discusses how parallel resource management programs and actions will be coordinated and information distributed through annual meetings.
- *A Plan Review and Revision Program* that defines how the RMP will be updated or revised over the term of the new license. RMP revisions may be based on results from monitoring and coordination meetings with other recreation providers in the project area.
- *An Interpretation and Education (I&E) Program* that defines how hydroelectric energy production, environmental, cultural, and informational interpretation and education will be coordinated and conducted by DWR at project facilities. This program involves several resource areas including recreation, aesthetics/visual, fisheries, water quality, terrestrial, geology, and cultural/historical. The I&E Program will complement and be conducted within the framework of existing and future DWR and California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) I&E programs, as described in and contemplated by the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (LOSRA) General Plan (in the case of LOSRA) and in the future Oroville Wildlife Area Management Plan (to be developed by DFG). The basis for the I&E Program will be DWR's and DPR's extensive existing resources – specifically, coordination of existing Lake

Oroville Visitors Center programs and staff with new and existing programs administered by DWR's Public Affairs Office (formerly the Office of Water Education) and DPR's Interpretation and Education Division, aided by the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Office of Natural Resource Education. The overall intent of the I&E Program is to help visitors gain an understanding and appreciation of the area's significant natural, cultural, historical, water supply, hydroelectric, and recreational features through the use of consistent themes and messages at all project recreation facilities. This program will be aimed at project facilities but will be coordinated with other local recreation service and regional marketing providers (e.g., Feather River Recreation and Park District [FRRPD], City of Oroville, City of Paradise, Butte County, and Oroville Chamber of Commerce).

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADAAG	Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
af	acre-feet
BBQ	barbecue
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIC	boat-in campground
BISC	Boating Information and Safety Center
BLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
BR	boat ramp
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
car-top BR	car-top boat ramp
CDEC	California Data Exchange Center
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CSU	California State University
CVP	Central Valley Project
DBW	California Department of Boating and Waterways
DFG	California Department of Fish and Game
DPR	California Department of Parks and Recreation
DUA	day use area
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EC	Ecological Committee
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FPA	Federal Power Act
FRRPD	Feather River Recreation and Park District
FRSA	Feather River Service Area
GIS	geographic information system
HPMP	Historic Properties Management Plan
I&E	interpretation and education
ISO	Independent System Operator
LCU	License Coordination Unit
LOSRA	Lake Oroville State Recreation Area
maf	million acre-feet
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
mph	miles per hour
msl	mean sea level
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
O&M	operations and maintenance
OHV	off-highway vehicle
ORCA	Oroville Recreation Coordinating Agencies
OWA	Oroville Wildlife Area
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PME	protection, mitigation, and enhancement
PRC	California Public Resources Code
project	Oroville Facilities Project No. 2100
PWC	personal watercraft
RA	Resource Action
RAC	Recreation Advisory Committee
RMP	Recreation Management Plan
ROW	right-of-way
RSWG	Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group
RV	recreational vehicle
SA	Settlement Agreement
SBF	Supplemental Benefit Fund
SR	State Route
SVRA	State Vehicular Recreation Area
SWC	State Water Contractors
SWP	State Water Project
TA	trailhead access
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
WCB	Wildlife Conservation Board



Lake Oroville

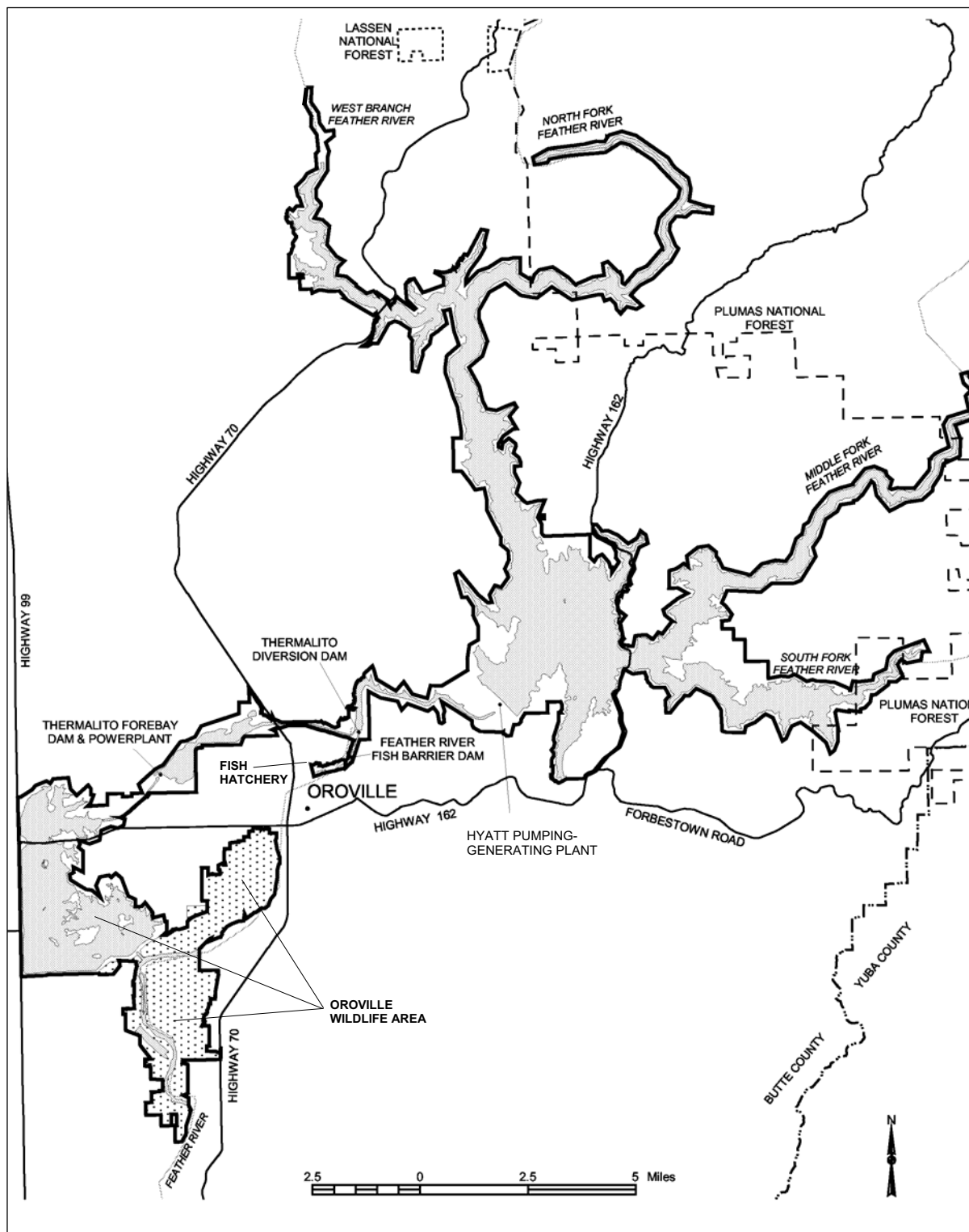
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has prepared this Settlement Agreement Recreation Management Plan (RMP) as an amended component of its Application for a new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) License to operate the Oroville Facilities (FERC Project No. 2100 or project). Over the past 3 years, in anticipation of the need for this RMP, a series of related studies have been conducted to assess and evaluate recreation resources associated with the Oroville Facilities. This RMP is the culmination of the results of those studies and is intended to relate most comprehensively to Relicensing Study R-17 – *Recreation Needs Analysis* (DWR 2004). This RMP also includes elements that are not directly detailed in Study R-17, but that were instead identified by stakeholders and DWR as being mutually beneficial toward the goals of recreation resource development and completion of a Settlement Agreement (SA) addressing a range of relicensing issues.

The Oroville Facilities are located on the Feather River at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in Butte County, California. The Oroville Facilities include Lake Oroville, the second largest reservoir in California and the primary water storage facility of the State Water Project (SWP). Lake Oroville and three other project reservoirs, as well as the Feather River, provide numerous water supply, power generation, and flood control benefits. A graphic overview of these facilities is provided in Figure 1.0-1. In addition, the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (LOSRA), the Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA), and other lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including a number of developed use areas, trails, camping areas, and undeveloped or primitive use areas within the project area.

This RMP complies with FERC's regulations per 18 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 4.51(f)(5) and includes the following components:

- A description of the existing recreation facilities of the Oroville Facilities that will be continued as project-related facilities during the new license term;
- Identification of existing facilities to be rehabilitated;
- Proposed new facilities and enhancement of existing facilities to meet existing or new recreation needs;
- A schedule for development or rehabilitation of all facilities;
- Identification of entities that will construct, maintain, and operate the facilities;
- An estimate of the costs of construction, operation, and maintenance of the facilities;
- Drawings of each recreation site illustrating approximate locations of existing and proposed facilities, as applicable;
- Descriptions of programs and/or plans for public interpretation and education;
- A plan for monitoring the use and condition of recreation facilities; and
- A plan for the periodic review, and revision as necessary, of the RMP.



Source: DWR 2003

Figure 1.0-1. Oroville Facilities FERC Project No. 2100 Boundary (2005).

Existing facilities at Lake Oroville offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities, principally within LOSRA lands managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Camping experiences in the area range from fully developed campgrounds to primitive, less-developed sites; boat-in and unique floating campsites also exist. There are two full-service marinas, nine boat ramps, six car-top boat ramps, 10 floating campsites, seven floating restrooms, and a visitor center located around Lake Oroville. There are developed recreation facilities at Loafer Creek, Bidwell Canyon, Spillway, and Lime Saddle. Recreation facilities are listed in Table 1.0-1 and their locations depicted in Figure 1.0-2. Other recreation opportunities include picnicking, swimming, horseback riding, hiking, off-road bicycle riding, wildlife watching, and hunting. The area also offers visitor information sites with cultural and informational displays about project facilities and the area's natural environment.

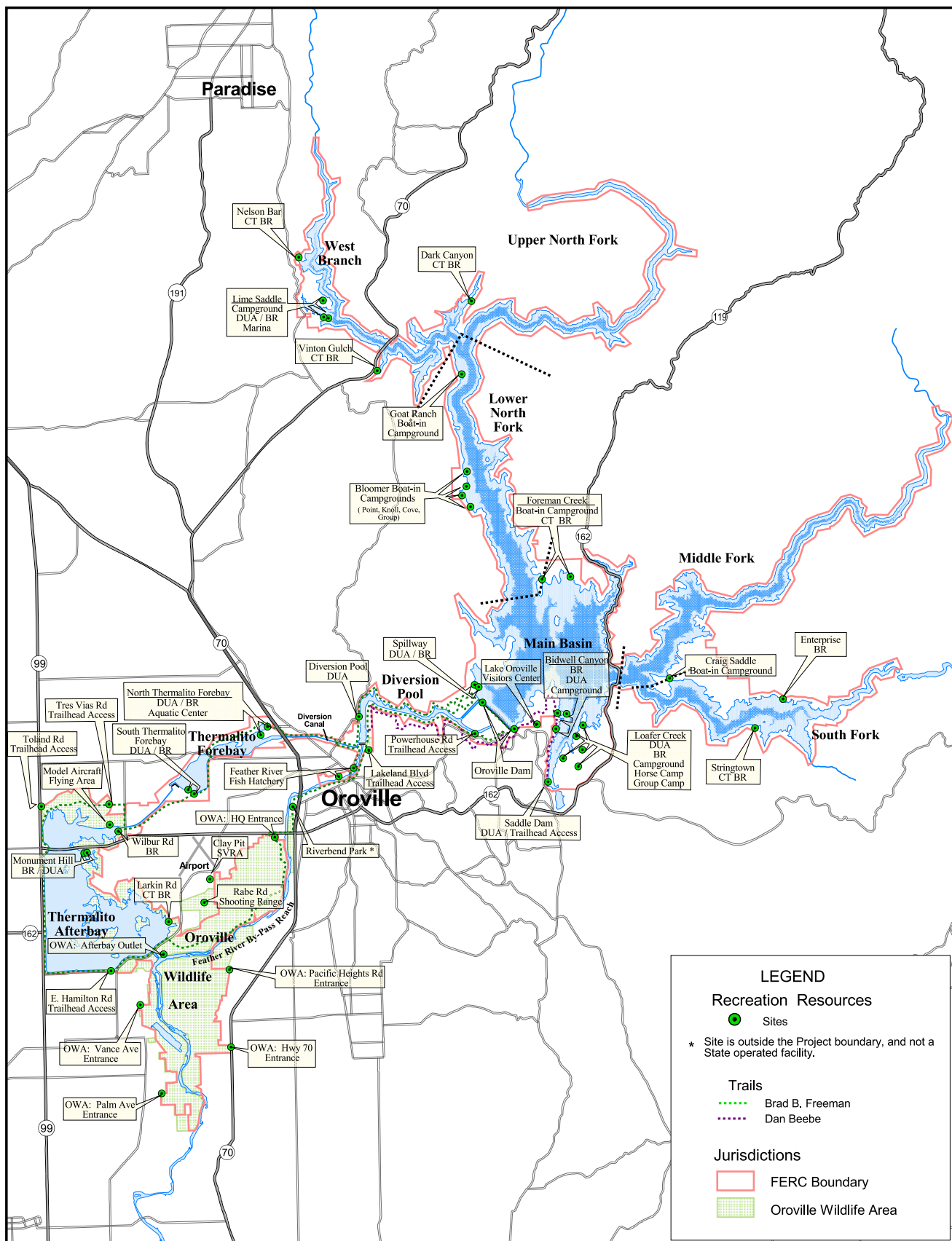
Additional recreational and visitor facilities are located at Thermalito Forebay, Diversion Pool, Thermalito Afterbay, and the OWA (Table 1.0-1 and Figure 1.0-2). Thermalito Forebay and most of the Diversion Pool area are part of the LOSRA and thus managed by DPR. Thermalito Afterbay, which is part of the OWA, and the OWA proper, are currently managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

Table 1.0-1. Existing recreation facilities within the project boundary.

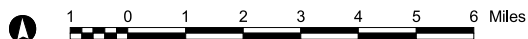
Facilities
<u>Campgrounds</u>
Individual, Group, and "En Route" Campsites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidwell Canyon Campground • Lime Saddle Campground • Lime Saddle Group Campground • Loafer Creek Campground • Loafer Creek Group Campground • Loafer Creek Horse Campground • Spillway "En Route" RV Campground • North Thermalito Forebay "En Route" RV Campground • OWA Camping Area
Boat-in Campsites (BICs) and Floating Campsites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goat Ranch BIC • Foreman Creek BIC • Craig Saddle BIC • Bloomer Cove BIC • Bloomer Knoll BIC • Bloomer Point BIC • Bloomer Group BIC • Floating Campsites
<u>Day Use Areas (DUAs)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion Pool (Burma Road) DUA • Feather River Fish Hatchery (DWR/DFG) • Lake Oroville Visitors Center (DWR/DPR) • Loafer Creek Boat Ramp (BR)/DUA • Oroville Dam DUA

Table 1.0-1. Existing recreation facilities within the project boundary.

Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oroville Wildlife Area • Model Airplane Flying Facility • OWA Thermalito Afterbay Outlet DUA
<p><u>Boat Ramps (BRs)</u></p>
<p>Boat Ramps with Day Use Areas</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidwell Canyon BR/DUA • Enterprise BR/DUA • Lime Saddle BR/DUA • Monument Hill BR/DUA • North Thermalito Forebay BR/DUA • South Thermalito Forebay BR/DUA • Spillway BR/DUA
<p>Boat Ramps</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilbur Road BR • Larkin Road Car-top BR • Foreman Creek Car-top BR • Stringtown Car-top BR • Dark Canyon Car-top BR • Nelson Bar Car-top BR • Vinton Gulch Car-top BR • Afterbay Outlet BR • OWA unimproved BRs
<p><u>Trailheads and Trails</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Hamilton Road Trailhead Access, Thermalito Afterbay • Toland Road Trailhead Access • Lakeland Boulevard Trailhead Access • Saddle Dam DUA Trailhead Access • Tres Vias Road Trailhead Access, Thermalito Afterbay • Bidwell Canyon Trail • Brad B. Freeman Trail • Chaparral Interpretive Trail • Dan Beebe Trail • Lime Saddle Trail • Loafer Creek Loop Trail • Loafer Creek Day Use/Campground Trail • Sewim Bo Trail • Oroville Wildlife Area Trails • Potter's Ravine Trail • Roy Rogers Trail • Wyk Island Trail



Source: DWR GIS / EDWA 2004



Original Scale 1 : 142,560
1" = 2.25 miles

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Oroville Facilities
FERC Project No. 2100

Figure 1.0-2
(RMP)

Project Area and
Associated Recreation Sites

